

Multiple Property Submittals to the National Register of Historic Places

What is a Multiple Property Submittal?

A Multiple Property Submittal (MPS) consists of an overview document (the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form) and individual Registration Forms for each property related to the contexts outlined in the overview. The concept is similar to the old "thematic" and "multiple resource area" nominations. Most MPS's are either thematic (e.g., Carnegie Libraries, Great Basin Style Rock Art Sites) or geographic in nature (e.g., Historic Resources of Brigham City, Historic and Archaeological Resources of Capitol Reef National Park). MPS's are designed to help better justify the significance of a group of properties and to make listing them in the National Register easier.

What are the "Historic Contexts" that MPS's Require?

They are simply a structured approach to providing the necessary background information within which historic properties can be understood and their significance justified. They must be framed by theme, place, and time. Traditional research sources (books, articles, etc) and the related properties themselves should be used in compiling contexts. Examples of contexts: The Livestock Industry [theme] in San Juan County [place], 1880-1920 [time]; Carnegie Libraries in Utah, 1905-1925; The CCC in Utah, 1934-40. Some contexts may be broadly defined (Salt Lake City Urban Expansion, 1890-1930) with a variety of associated property types (high-rise commercial buildings, industrial buildings, subdivision developments, apartments, etc.), while others may be narrowly defined (Second Empire Style Houses in Kanab, 1885-1910).

How many historic contexts should be documented in a MPS?

There may be as few as one historic context in a MPS or a dozen or more. MPS's for most communities will probably have 3-6 contexts. All of the contexts do not have to be completed at one time

Must all of the buildings related to a context be nominated at one time?

No, in fact in most instances only a portion of the eligible properties are submitted for nomination at the same time as the overview. Nomination forms for the other properties can be completed and submitted when time/funding allows and when the owners or interested public are interested in doing so. Though not all of the properties must be nominated at one time, a majority of them should be looked at and documented to some degree in order write-up the context.

What are some of the common problems encountered in preparing a MPS?

- Repetition of information. Avoid repeating information in the various sections of the multiple property form--context, description, significance, registration requirements.
- Unclear statements of significance for the various property types. These should be concise, thorough statements that justify why the properties meet the National Register criteria. They should be summary paragraphs, so avoid repeating a lot of specific details.
- Imprecise registration requirements. Specific requirements for integrity, age, historical associations, and so forth must be provided so that it is clear what standards must be met by properties nominated in the future under this context.
- Too much information. For example, the MPS for a community should not be the definitive history of the town. It should be thorough but concise, using footnotes to reference more detailed sources.
- Contexts without buildings. Some states have developed "empty" contexts (e.g., Ranching, Mining, Education, etc.) with the idea of providing contextual information for nominating any buildings that are related to those themes. Utah has taken the position that a good understanding of the actual buildings and sites is needed in order to write a proper context; written sources alone are insufficient.